

REPEAL OF THE SPECIAL OCCUPATIONAL TAXES ON ALCOHOL

HON. ROBERT T. MATSUI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I join my good friend and colleague, Representative DAVE CAMP, today in introducing legislation that will repeal the Special Occupational Tax (SOT) on taxpayers who manufacture, distribute, and sell alcoholic beverages. The special occupational tax is not a tax on alcoholic products but rather operates as a license fee on businesses. Believe it or not, this tax was originally implemented to help finance the Civil War. I began the fight to repeal this unfair tax back in 1992. This is an inequitable tax that has outlived its original purpose and is a clear example of an antiquated approach to federal taxation.

The SOT on alcohol was dramatically increased during a budget process in 1986 and has unfairly burdened business owners across the country. Repealing the SOT would provide immediate and visible relief to thousands of small businesses in every congressional district. According to the ATF, there are 480,427 locations nationwide that pay this tax every year, including 458,603 retailers. These retail establishments account for \$114 million out of \$126 million in SOT revenues.

In my district, repealing the SOT will save convenience stores approximately \$50,750 annually. Repealing the SOT will save California wineries approximately \$750,000 annually and California restaurants approximately \$20 million annually.

This tax is hardest on small businesses. A one-store operator pays the same SOT as a Wal-Mart Super center. In fact, a chain of four neighborhood food stores pays the same annual tax as the nation's largest single site brewery or distillery—\$1,000. This is not what Congress had in mind 150 years ago, and I don't believe it is a situation we want today.

Repeal of the SOT on alcohol is supported by a broad-based group of business organizations and enjoys widespread bipartisan support on Capitol Hill. Senators Max Baucus and Jim Bunning are introducing similar legislation in the Senate today. The Joint Committee on Taxation has examined the efficacy of the SOT several times and found it fundamentally flawed, and has recommended its repeal in its 2001 tax simplification report.

With small businesses being hardest hit by the recent economic troubles, repeal of the SOT will provide much needed assistance to these important employers. It is time for us to move forward and enact legislation to repeal the SOT on alcohol. We urge our colleagues to join us in this endeavor.

TRIBUTE TO ANTHONY PAUL SPITALERI

HON. ANNA G. ESHOO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Ms. ESHOO. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Anthony Paul Spitaleri who is retiring after a distinguished career in service to the City of

Palo Alto and its Fire Department for thirty-five years.

On January 1, 1967, Anthony "Tony" Spitaleri joined the Stanford Fire Department as a Firefighter. The Stanford Fire Department merged with the Palo Alto Fire Department in 1976, and Tony rose through the ranks to become Fire Captain. He has served his coworkers ably as President of the Palo Alto Firefighters Union (Local 1319) for more than a quarter century with professionalism and commitment. He helped recruit and retain a force of highly qualified firefighters and developed safe standards for staffing and equipment. He's been a tireless fundraiser for many community causes, and recently helped raise \$800,000 for the families of New York Firefighters following the tragedies of September 11th.

Mr. Speaker, Tony Spitaleri is known throughout our community as an unselfish, enthusiastic, thorough, fair, compassionate, courteous man and he's one of the best barbequers around! I salute him for his extraordinary leadership which has made our community safer and stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Anthony Paul Spitaleri for his outstanding service to our community and wishing him a retirement filled with every blessing.

TRIBUTE TO VIRGINIA "GINNIE" MUIR HIRSCH

HON. SAM FARR

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. FARR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Virginia "Ginnie" Muir Hirsch. She passed away in the early morning of January 29 in her home in Santa Cruz, California. Her husband, Fred, and their three daughters Liza, Leslie, and Laurie were at her side.

Ginnie was born in Altoona, Pennsylvania on August 4, 1925. She came from a family of strong Democrats. Because of her father's leftist ideals, he had difficulty finding a job in Altoona. Eventually the family was forced to migrate to West Virginia so that Ginnie's father could find work.

Ginnie moved to New York in 1942, where she began working for the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born and for the American Slav Congress. Ginnie worked continuously during the period of anti-leftist hysteria in the nineteen forties, supporting many activists who were being deported for their progressive ideologies. While helping to organize a 1949 concert by Paul Robeson, her 1937 Oldsmobile was pushed over a cliff in what became known as the Peekskill Riot. The next day, in clothes bloodied by cross-burning Klansmen, Virginia testified with Paul Robeson about the attack.

Ginnie was married in 1952. In 1957 she and her husband moved to California with their children. Virginia held down two jobs, campaigned against the "right to work" law, and fought against the deportation and abuse of Mexican immigrants. In San Jose, Ginnie became an active member of the Office of Professional Employees International Union, and for a number of years she worked for the local Retail Clerks Union. She was also a founding member of the Friends of the Stu-

dent Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, which involved traveling to Mississippi and bringing supplies to SNCC.

Ginnie has been a life-long activist in California labor politics. As a board member for the Central Labor Council, she consistently supported the United Farm Workers as well as a number of East San Jose labor organizations. In 1967 Virginia moved her family to Delano, California to open the first legal office for Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers. She was also an integral part of the jury investigation team for the 1971 trial of Angela Davis.

Ginnie continued through her years in San Jose, and later in Santa Cruz, providing for her family and working for peace, against racism, and for social and economic justice. She regretted that leukemia made her unable to take part in the January 18 anti-war actions in San Francisco and died less than two weeks later.

Mr. Speaker, Virginia Muir Hirsch will be remembered in the community for her years of service and the invaluable contributions she has made to the progressive cause.

BALANCED BUDGET AMENDMENT

HON. ERNEST J. ISTOOK, JR.

OF OKLAHOMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 13, 2003

Mr. ISTOOK. Mr. Speaker, today we are reintroducing the Balanced Budget Amendment for the U.S. Constitution. Although we recently enjoyed four years of balanced federal budgets, the results of 9-11, the fight against terrorism, and economic challenges have all pushed us back into a sea of red ink.

Although borrowing can be justified to protect America in a time of national emergency, deficits should not be acceptable in normal times. So, unless we first set a goal of balancing the budget again, it will never happen. And recent experience once again proves that we need the discipline that a Balanced Budget Amendment provides.

I'm especially happy for the support of Wisconsin's JAMES SENSENBRENNER, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and also of the Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Constitution, STEVE CHABOT from Ohio. And, of course, the long-time leading Democrat on this issue, Congressman CHARLES STENHOLM of Texas.

I also want to acknowledge the pioneering work done by National Taxpayer's Union, the nation's largest organization representing the interests of taxpayers, and their work with Congressman STENHOLM and Senator LARRY CRAIG who have been working on this issue for the last quarter century.

It's time to set the standard, and show America what our goals are. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle you are on. Some people complain about the deficit, and say that's why they oppose tax relief. Others complain about the deficit and say that's why they oppose spending. But everyone who complains about the deficit should support the goal of balancing the budget again. It's hypocritical to say you oppose the deficit but don't support the balanced budget amendment.

With the expenses of the war on terrorism, we won't balance the budget in the next year or two. And it will take a couple of years for